A LADY's Religion: IN A LETTER

To the Honourable
My Lady *Howard.*

The Second Edition.

To which is added,
A Second Letter to the same Lady, concerning the Import of Fear in Religion.

By a Divine of the Church of *England.*

LONDON:
Printed for *A.* and *J. Churchill* at the *Black-Swan* in *Paternoster-Row.* 1704.

A

THE PUBLISHER TO THE READER.

THE Letter of Religion, which is here reprinted, having taken a courſe into the World, by being tranſlated into ſeveral modern Languages, I found that a very particular Critical Obſervation upon it was annexed to the *French* Tranſlation. This Letter of Remarks was written, as is commonly believed, by a very learned and judicious Foreigner, well

known in *England* for his great Skill in *Critical* Learning. I have published a Translation thereof before this Impression; omiting what he wrote concerning his Friend's Translation of the Letter into *French*; well hoping, that the impartial Judgment of so able a Critick may delight the Reader, and recommend the Book.

THE

THE PREFACE TO THE *French* Translation.

I Do not know whether this small Treatise will meet in the World with more Criticks or Admirers; but whatsoever happens, as I have told you already, so I tell you again, that in my Judgment it is an excellent Book: should any one convince me of the contrary, I shall readily renounce the Opinion I have of it. But as I am as yet perswaded, that this small Treatise contains nothing but what is every way conformable to Reason, and the Doctrine which Jesus Christ *came*

to preach upon the Earth; ſo I am ready to declare as much to any one who ſhall ask my Opinion herein. I am always us'd to do ſo in what relates to any important Truth; being of Opinion, that a Man cannot be ſilent on ſuch an occaſion without betraying his Conſcience.

If I am not miſtaken, the deſign of our Author was to make appear, that the Chriſtian *Religion ought to be levelled and accommodated to the reach of the meaneſt Capacity; and that by conſequence it ought not to be confounded with thoſe ſubtile and abſtruſe Queſtions with which Divines make ſo great a noiſe; and upon which they have wrangled for ſo many Ages: This, I ſay, is the deſign which the Author of this Work propos'd to himſelf; and in which (it ſeems to me) he has very happily ſucceeded; in giving us a true and faithful Deſcription of Religion, ſuch as* Jeſus Chriſt *taught*

taught Mankind; full of Wiſdom, eaſy to be explain'd, and every way adapted to the Capacity of the Illiterate, of Women, and of the meaneſt ſort of People, that is to ſay, of the greateſt part of Mankind.

Suppoſing then that Religion is for the uſe of the vulgar and unlearned, which no one, I believe, will be ſo bold as to deny, I do not ſee what can reaſonably be objected againſt the deſign of our Author, or his manner of Performance; the deſcription he gives us of Religion repreſents it to be of eaſy examination, and extreamly clear and plain. Now, is it not requiſite that it ſhould have theſe Qualifications to be within the reach of the greateſt part of Men? who being neceſſarily obliged, as our Author obſerves, to provide for their own and Families Neceſſities, to perform the common Duties of Life, cannot apply them-

ſelves to the examination of a Religion that ſhould be hard to be underſtood, or requiring a long examination.

Shall we object, that our Author has forgot ſeveral famous Controverſies in Divinity? but if theſe Controverſies make any part of Religion, we muſt then retract what we but now ſuppoſed, viz. *that the* Chriſtian *Religion ought to be for the uſe of the Simple and Illiterate, as well as for the Learned. We muſt then ſay, That Religion was then given to Men only to exerciſe their wit, or to improve their Talent in diſputing with one another; whereas, if we may believe St.* Paul, *God revealed it to us to teach us to put away our ill habits, and* to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World.

I ſee

I ſee plainly, that to judge of Religion, by the Idea which the Apoſtle *gives us thereof in that place, it is admirably calculated for the uſe of all thoſe Perſons who are incapable of a long Application of Mind, and who have neither penetration nor leiſure enough to give up themſelves to the ſtudy of curious and ſubtle Inquiries, not eaſily to be reſolved.*

But I cannot comprehend how the ſame Judgment can be made of the Controverſies which have reign'd among Divines for ſo long a time, they are ſo very abſtruſe, that even among thoſe who make it their ſtudy to explain them to others, there are but few who perfectly comprehend what they turn upon. Yet it is not ſufficient to know well the knotty part of the Queſtion, unleſs we can give the true ſolution of it. But can any thing be more difficult than

positively and absolutely to determine a Matter among so great a number of different Opinions? No sooner hath a Divine pass'd his Judgment upon one of these Controversies, but he is immediately oppos'd by other Divines, who give quite another determination: Upon which others arise, who make up a third Party follow'd by a fourth, which being contrary to all three, is again attack'd by fresh Combatants. Now if Religion should consist of such Controversies as these, what will become of the poor illiterate Laity, who are not able to understand even the very Words or Terms made use of in these Disputes? Must poor Country People adhere to their Curate's or Minister's determination blindly, and without comprehending it?

But supposing that we could understand our Divines determinations

(of

(of which Experience ſhews us the contrary) is that ſufficient to give us a right to approve of them? No certainly, for we muſt alſo underſtand the Reaſons of their Adverſaries: And then having compar'd the ſtrength of their Arguments with that of our Divines, we are to embrace and adhere only to that Opinion which ſhall appear moſt agreeable to Reaſon. People may cavil as much as they pleaſe, but after all this is a Matter, which, according to the Laws of Juſtice and Equity cannot be diſpenſed with. You and I know very well ſuch and ſuch a Miniſter, who preaches every day againſt certain Hereticks, *hath never ſeen ſo much as the covers of their Books, nor known their Titles; Pray y' tell me how can we in good Conſcience determine our ſelves upon what ſuch Divines ſhall lay to the charge of their pretended* Hereticks? *Should we approve of a Ma-*

hometan

hometan who would believe all that a Faquir, *who had never read the* Goſpel, *ſhould deliver in a* Moſque *againſt the* Chriſtian *Religion? the caſe is exactly parallel.*

You will perhaps reply, that a Preacher of Controverſy does not only eſtabliſh his own Opinion, but at the ſame time he confutes that of his Adverſaries; and tho' he has not read their Books, yet he has ſeen Paſſages taken from them in the Books of ſome learned Profeſſor of his own Party. But, Sir, who will aſſure you, that this Preacher or Profeſſor has given a true and impartial account *of the Opinions which they refute? How will you know that they do not diſguiſe or ſuppreſs ſome of the beſt and ſtrongeſt of their Adverſaries Arguments? We ſee daily, that a Story, in which no body has any Intereſt, is changed and falſify'd as it paſſes through diffe-*

different Mouths. With how much greater reaſon ought we to fear and ſuſpect, that a Man who undertakes to refute another in the preſence of a numerous Aſſembly, will, either willingly or otherwiſe, weaken, as much as poſſible, his Adverſaries Reaſons, the more eaſily to deſtroy them, and thereby to ſecure to himſelf the honour of a Triumph? therefore it would be an act of great temerity to condemn thoſe whom the Chiefs of any Party are pleas'd to ſtile Hereticks *without reading them.*

Beſides, tho' our Divines and Preachers ſhould have given us a faithful Account of their Arguments, we cannot condemn them upon ſuch a report, without being guilty of the greateſt Partiality; for a Judge that ſhould condemn a Man upon the bare report of his Adverſary, without ever hearing what he could ſay

in his own defence, is an unjuſt Judge, tho' in reality his Sentence be according to juſtice. An Heathen Poet *hath long ſince told us that,*

Qui ſtatuit, aliquid parte inauditâ alterâ
Æquum licet ſtatuerit, haud æquus fuerit.

If the Heathens have known by the ſole light of Nature, that no body ought to be condemned, without having been heard, how can we diſpenſe with our ſelves for not obſerving that Rule which Jeſus Chriſt *himſelf hath taught us in theſe expreſs Terms,* Judge not that ye be not judged?

It may poſſibly be reply'd by ſome good Perſons, that Precautions are by no means ſo neceſſary in the Church *as in the* Civil State, *becauſe Divines have ſuch tender Conſciences, as*

as not to diſguiſe or weaken the ſtrength and ſenſe of their Adverſaries Reaſons. But, alas! they know little of the World who talk after this manner. We need but hear the Divines themſelves in order to be convinc'd, that it is not ſafe at all to depend upon their Fidelity.

For without running back into the Hiſtory of the firſt Ages, when the Biſhops, true Court-Weather-Cocks, turn'd about with every little Wind, to conform themſelves to the pleaſure of the Prince; I ſay, without running back ſo far, do we not every Day hear the Divines complaining of their Adverſaries unfaithfulneſs, reproaching one another for being made to ſpeak againſt their own Minds, for horrible Opinions, for odious and deteſtable Conſequences imputed to them, ſuch as they never once dreamt of? Nor are theſe Reproaches to be found only among Divines of diffe-

rent

rent Communions; but even they of the same Party, whenever divided about the Explication of some particular Text or Doctrine do the same thing. One may see them in such a case falling upon one another with greater Rage and Fury, than if they were writing against the professed Enemies of their Society. We hear of nothing but false Imputations, imperfect Quotations, and malignant Reflections. And if we believe the reciprocal Complaints of each Party, we shall find reason to conclude, that

One's in the Right, and
T'other is not Wrong.

Furthermore, Divines who meet together to examine those scandalous Quarrels of their Brethren, and put an end to the dispute by a definitive Decree or Sentence; Divines, I say, so assembled wrest and dis-

diſguiſe the Sentiments of one of the Parties, and make 'em ſpeak another ſenſe than what was really theirs. The late difference between Monſieur Saurin *and Monſieur* Jurieu *will here preſent it ſelf to my Memory whether I will or no. I leave it to you to make the Application. One needs only to read the* Prefaces *of theſe two famous* Antagoniſts, *to be fully convinc'd, that he would do himſelf an Injury to place a blind and implicit dependance on the Truth and Fidelity of Divines, whether apart or in Convocation, and this according to their own Confeſſion.*

The concluſion from what has bin ſaid, is this, that Religion does not conſiſt in thoſe ſubtle and abſtruſe Queſtions about which Divines have been divided in their Opinions for ſo many Ages, ſince the Common People do not underſtand them, and

are

are in an absolute Incapacity ever to do so; for does not Jesus Christ *expressly declare, that he came to preach the Gospel to the Poor? from whence it necessarily follows, that his Doctrine ought to be* proportionate *to their Capacities: And such it is in effect, as any one may see plainly, by reading over the* Gospel; *as the Author of this Book hath in few words clearly made out.*

We may conclude also from hence, that we ought to take care, that we make not our selves a Party *with Divines, by* siding *in their passionate* Contests, *since it is not in our Power perfectly to know the* Differences *between them: There being no danger in a Man's forbearing to give his Judgment upon these Matters, which he does not understand; but we cannot lawfully condemn both the Opinions of a Man,*

and

and the Man himſelf, (for in true Divinity theſe two go all together) without juſt and cogent Reaſons moving us ſo to do. This is viſibly expoſing our ſelves to the ſame Puniſhments which we judge to be due to them whom we condemn ſo raſhly; that is, if we damn *a Man for holding ſuch or ſuch Opinions, which we our ſelves, by our own ſtudy and diligence, could not be throughly acquainted with, have we not reaſon to fear leſt we alſo ſhould incur the ſame* Damnation *for paſſing ſo raſh and haſty a Judgment? the Declaration which* JESUS CHRIST *hath made us in this caſe cannot be more expreſs than it is*; Judge not, *(ſaith that Divine Preacher)* that you be not judged; for WITH WHAT judgement you judge, you ſhall be judged. *And* WITH WHAT meaſure you mete, it ſhall be meted to you again. *Matth.* 7. 1, 2.

To

To be able to pronounce decisively upon the Disputes of Divines, one must plunge himself over-head in reading a great many large Volumes, full of barbarous and unintelligible Terms; and also of intricate and endless Questions. But our Profession does not allow us so to play away our time: Let us not then concern our selves in judging of such Controversies, but rather leave to the Divines the sorry comfort *of disputing eternally and bitterly against those who contradict them. I am in doubt whether they will save themselves by those means; but this I am sure of, that we should run the risque of losing our selves, if we should second them in their passionate Contests; not knowing why, or for what cause we do so. 'Tis sufficient for us to satisfy our selves with the knowledge of God's Will, as it is clearly revealed to us in the Gospel.*

Goſpel. Let us endeavour all we can to put it in practice: Let us love one another, and do unto others as we would they ſhould do unto us: Let us live without envying, being contented with that ſtate of Life which God has been pleaſed to call us to; and let us labour in earneſt to correct in our ſelves what we find amiſs, and to make continual improvments in Virtue; and by this means, when this Life is ended, to ſecure to our ſelves the poſſeſſion of an eternal happineſs. This is properly our Buſineſs; and it is no ſmall work if we acquit our ſelves therein as we ought to do.

Having thus freely given you my Thoughts concerning Divines and their Diſputes, I perceive that I have ſpoken in too general a manner. We muſt give every one his due. It is not true that all Divines are equally infatuated with The-

Theological Controverſies. There are ſome who ſay with St. James, *that* Pure Religion, and undefiled before God, is to viſit the Fatherleſs and the Widows, and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the World. *Such is the Author of the* Lady's Religion ; *for he is a Divine of the Church of* England : *You know it no otherwiſe than by the Title, which oftentimes is deceitful : But I was informed ſo by a learned* Engliſh Gentleman, *who writ to me from* London ; *and aſſur'd me of it as of a known and unqueſtionable Truth.*

Give me leave to add one word more upon the occaſion of writing this Book. You muſt know that the Author being conſulted by the Lady Howard, *upon the manner of preparing ones ſelf for the Holy Communion, took occaſion from thence to draw this excellent Portraicture*

of

of the Chriſtian Religion, *to the end that he might ſhew what are the Duties which its Profeſſion obliges us to at all times, both before, at, and after our preparing for that Holy Ceremony. Do you not admire this Anſwer? for my part I am of Opinion, that our Author could not have given a more excellent proof of his ſolid Judgment, and the knowledge he hath of the true nature and genius of Religion. The moſt part of Men reduce Religion to ſome particular Acts of Devotion, practiſed at certain ſet times; but they are groſly miſtaken: Religion does not conſiſt in certain Formalities, depending on certain Times and Places, but in a conſtant habit of watching over our Conduct, of conquering our Paſſions, and ſtudying inceſſantly to grow more and more Virtuous. This is what your Author has happily made good, and wherein he has given us ſuch*

excellent Directions, which, if ſeriouſly apply'd to and practis'd, will be of great uſe and ſervice in the Reformation of Manners. This, in my Judgment, is one of the beſt Performances in his Treatiſe ———

A LADY's RELIGION.

MADAM,

SInce God has been pleas'd to incline your Heart to an early and ſerious enquiry after Religion, ſo that you are ſincerely deſirous to know the Will of God, in order to do it, I heartily wiſh you had laid your Commands upon one more able to aſſiſt you, than I am: who, being bred up in Age of Speculation and Controverſy, have addicted my ſelf to the ſtudy of Divinity more perhaps than to the Practice of Religion; and have

been (I pray God forgive me) more desirous to furnish my Head with Notions, than my Heart with good Inclinations. I thought my self, by my Profession, chiefly engag'd in a study how to defend the Church by Law establish'd against all Dissenters, rather than to promote the common Cause of serious Piety; and whilst by the strange unaccountable Genius of this Age, I have been led aside to mix the Study of Politicks with that of Religion, I have been busily assisting the Office of a Minister of State, rather than doing the good work of a Minister of *Jesus Christ*.

Now although it has pleas'd God to make me in some measure sensible of those By-paths, in which I have sometimes walk'd, to the hinderance of that Duty unto which I ought intirely to have

have devoted my ſelf; yet I am apt to fear leſt thoſe Prejudices and undue Prepoſſeſſions of Mind may ſtill remain within me, by which I ſhall be prevented from giving your Ladyſhip ſuch an Idea of Religion, as is ſhort, plain, and pure, free from ſuperſtitious Appendages, and ſeparate from every by-intereſt.

But without doubt ſuch as this is the true Spirit of the Chriſtian Religion, every Line whereof directly tends to make us eaſy within our ſelves, kind and comfortable to one another here, and happy with God hereafter.

That our holy Religion is a wiſe Inſtitution, will be evident to any one who conſiders that God is its Author, whoſe Wiſdom appears in all his Works: Thus the frame of viſible Nature being agreeably ſet

together, and having each part of it ſuited to uſeful and proper ends, demonſtrates it ſelf to be the work of divine Wiſdom: in like manner the whole Plan of pure Religion, having alſo its parts ſuitable to each other, and every one of them agreeably ſet to the ſame good and great Deſign of the whole, does thereby prove it ſelf to be the contrivance of an All-wiſe God.

And hereby the Wiſdom of the Chriſtian Religion will particularly appear, becauſe every part of it tends to promote the univerſal good of Mankind; for which reaſon the divine Founder thereof was nam'd *Jeſus*, (that is) *Saviour*, becauſe his only deſign was to ſave us from the prevailing Power of Sin, and from thoſe Miſeries in which that evil power would involve us.

Thus

Thus *Temperance* promotes our Health, *Juſtice* in our Dealings prevents us from ſuſtaining the Revenges of the Injur'd, and gains us Truſt among Men, with all the benefits which ariſe from thence. *Charity*, by promoting the common Good of others, draws back their Love and Affection to our ſelves; while *Patience* preſerves Quiet within our own Breaſts, and *Self-denial*, by reſtraining our extravagant Appetites, eſtabliſhes the juſt power of Reaſon over us; thereby fitting us for all conditions of Life; and thus the Law of *Chriſt* anſwers to the Character of Wiſdom, by its agreeableneſs to the beſt deſign of God in the chiefeſt good of Man: and upon this account *Solomon* character'd the Idea of Religion under the name of Wiſdom.

Beſide theſe moral Duties, there are ſeveral Threats of God's Judgments, and Promiſes of his Favour contain'd in Chriſt's Inſtitution; the former were wiſely deſign'd to reſtrain us from Immoralities, which are our greateſt Follies; and the latter to engage us in the practice of Vertue, which is our greateſt Wiſdom: The Threatnings prepare the way for the Promiſes, and qualify us to receive 'em; inaſmuch as they ſhake off our Affections from ill Objects, in order for the Promiſes to fix them upon good ones. We muſt needs ceaſe to do Evil, before we can learn to do Well.

Now although a due conſideration of the Divine Nature will carry us on to the belief of a future State, in which he who is in perfection the beſt of all Beings, will diſtin-

diſtinguiſh the good from the bad by ample Rewards and juſt Puniſhments: yet becauſe every ones Capacity may not be ſufficient to make this wiſe reflection, therefore *Jeſus Chriſt* was pleas'd (as the Goſpel phraſes it) *to bring Life and Immortality to light: i. e.* to give the World full aſſurance of a future State, in which the juſt God will diſtinguiſh Men hereafter, in ſuch a manner as they ſhall diſtinguiſh themſelves here; and 'tis the wiſdom of every one to preſerve this belief in his Heart, and bear it always about him, becauſe 'tis the moſt awful Monitor againſt our committing Folly, and yields the ſtrongeſt encouragement to Virtue.

From what has been ſaid, your Ladyſhip ſees firſt what is meant by *ſaving a Soul*, viz. to deliver it from vicious Habits and fearful

Puniſhments, the fatal conſequents of ſuch Habits; and by eſtabliſhing Virtue therein, to recommend it to the favour of God. And ſecondly, that the Goſpel of Chriſt was deſign'd to this very end; and its tendency hereunto is its Wiſdom. And thirdly, from hence you alſo perceive in what reſpect Faith in *Jeſus Chriſt* is ſaid to ſave us, *viz.* becauſe this Faith is our receiving the Chriſtian Moral for the Rule of our Lives, and the Threats and Promiſes contain'd in the Goſpel, for the outward motives of our practice according to that Rule.

And from theſe three Conſiderations, ſumm'd up together, you may examine all the various pretences which differing Churches and Communions make to the purity of Chriſtian Faith, ſo as to form a right Judgment of 'em; for that

that Communion which manifests it self to have no other design, than to assist its Members in saving their Souls from the power of Sin, by the Moral and Motives aforementionʼd, is certainly the purest Church; and that Faith which has no other tendency, is the purest Faith. So that if you form your self upon this Principle, you may pass by all nice Speculations, or profound Mysteries, which have no direct tendency to improve your Morals, without any hazard of Salvation.

Secondly, As the Christian Institution is wisely practical, so it is plain: or in other words, we may say, that as the wisdom of the Christian Religion appears first by its being *practical*, so it appears secondly by being *plain*. The obscure Answers which were given out from the old Heathen Oracles,

are now known to have proceeded from the indirectneſs of a deſigning Prieſthood: who, to maintain their pretence of foretelling what ſhall come to paſs, ſent back all thoſe who came to inquire after future Events, with doubtful and uncertain Anſwers. And it has been the obſervation of wiſe Men, that when any one affects to be dark and myſterious in his Converſation, either he has ſome indirect deſign in ſo doing, or elſe whilſt he makes an oſtentation of Wiſdom, he does in reality but diſcover his Folly.

Now the Wiſdom of God cannot be conceiv'd to aim at any other deſign in communicating itſelf to us, than the Information of our Minds in the nature of Good and Evil, and this in order to direct our choice; and all Inſtruction muſt of neceſſity be plain: ſince

ſince 'tis by things eaſy and familiar, ſuch as at firſt ſight we may apprehend, whereby we can be led on to the knowledge of Matters more remote and difficult: but obſcure and unintelligible Doctrines can have no effect upon us beſide unprofitable amuſement; and *whatſoever is by the wiſdom of God laid out of our reach, can be no part of our concern.*

Farther, to what end did he give us intellectual Faculties? ſurely not to amuſe but to improve us, by enabling us throughly to underſtand each part of our holy Religion, which directly tends to that end, *viz.* our moral Improvement: as you will ſoon perceive, if you reduce the Chriſtian Inſtitution to its general Heads, which are theſe.

Firſt, A Narration of Matters of Fact.

Secondly,

Secondly, A Declaration of moral Laws.

Thirdly, A Revelation of ſuch Motives which are proper to inforce this Law upon our Minds. And

Fourthly, Serious Exhortations to refreſh our Memories with our Duty: and earneſtly to recommend it to our practice.

Firſt, Your Ladyſhip ſees, that the Matters of Fact contain'd in the Four Goſpels, and the Acts of the Apoſtles (*viz.* the Travels and Tranſactions of Chriſt and his Diſciples) are ſo plainly related, that you underſtand the Relation as eaſily as you read it. And *Secondly*, All Laws *muſt* be plain, becauſe they are Directions. Now, obſcure Directions are but Deluſi-

ons.

ons. And *Laws* which are dubious and difficult to be understood, are *Traps* and *Snares*. And *Thirdly*, 'Tis as neceſſery that *Motives* ſhould be very intelligible, becauſe their deſign is to work ſtrongly upon our Wills, by convincing our Underſtandings. Add to this *Fourthly*, That myſtical and unintelligible *Exhortations* are ridiculous, upon which account St. *Paul* forbad religious Exerciſes to be perform'd in an unknown Tongue.

Now as the four Goſpels and Acts of the Apoſtles contain Matters of Fact, Laws, and Motives; ſo the Epiſtles contain Exhortations to Seriouſneſs and Piety, ariſing from the Laws, Facts, and Motives before-mention'd: and I take theſe Books to be ſufficiently comprehenſive of the Inſtitutions and Ordinances of Jeſus Chriſt: which

which ought indeed to be eaſily intelligible, becauſe they concern the poor, weak, and unletter'd People as much as the Learned.

Nor can I ſee that the Doctrine of Chriſt was by him, or his Apoſtles, deliver'd firſt of all into the hands of the Learned, to be by them convey'd into the Minds of the Ignorant; but, on the contrary, 'tis manifeſt that our Saviour directed both his Diſcourſes and Actions immediately to the common People, as well as to the Scribe; and in like manner did his Diſciples addreſs their Preachings and Writings.

From all this Diſcourſe, concerning the clearneſs of Chriſt's Inſtitution, you may ſpare yourſelf the needleſs trouble of reading abſtruſe and myſterious Points of Divinity. Nor need you ſuffer

your ſelf to be amus'd with the pretended deep Speculations of profound Men, when you have the plain directions of a wiſe and a good God before you, in following whereof you ſhall meet with great Reward.

Thirdly, The Chriſtian Inſtitution is ſhort. True and genuine Religion has always been ſumm'd up, and gathered together into a narrow compaſs, by thoſe who beſt underſtood it. Thus *Micah* (6. 8.) ſpeaking of God ſaith, *He hath ſhewn thee, O Man, what is good, and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee? but to do juſtice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.* And our Saviour ſumms up the whole Law in our Love to God, and our Neighbour. And in another place, includes the whole ſcope of the Law and the Prophets, in this one Rule,

Rule, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye unto them*; hereby directing us to make a right use of that Reason which God establish'd as his Oracle in our Breasts: to which we may at all times resort; and from whence we may be resolv'd in such cases as concern our duty to one another.

For as by consulting your own Reason, you know wherein you are justly dealt with, and wherein you receive wrong; when you are kindly us'd, and when otherwise: so from the same principle of Reason you cannot but know when you deal justly or wrongfully, and when you do kind or ill Offices to another; this one short comprehensive Rule, taking for its Foundation the Equality of Mankind, in respect of their common Nature, renders Religion it self a matter *sensible* unto us.

For

For I can feel the wound of a ſharp ſlanderous Tongue as ſenſibly as that of a Sword; I can feel the wrongs done to my ſelf and Family; and am as much ſenſible of the benefits I enjoy from the juſt and kind Dealings of thoſe with whom I am concern'd; and hereby I am in the ſhorteſt and plaineſt way admoniſh'd of my behaviour to others: And if this one ſhort Rule were reduc'd to practice, the ſtate of Paradiſe would be reſtor'd, and we ſhould enjoy a Heaven upon Earth.

For hereby firſt all Perſecutions for Conſcience ſake, which have occaſion'd ſuch violent Diſorders, and vaſt effuſion of Blood, would be at an end, becauſe every one who has any Conſcience, would moſt willingly preſerve it free from the Impoſitions of Men in the wor-

ſhip

ſhip of God. To compel Men by Fire and Faggot to partake even of a delicious Entertainment, is a ſavage ſort of Hoſpitality.

Secondly, All Factions in any State would be at an end, if every Member thereof were contented, that every one of his Fellow-Members, who was not an Enemy to the Government, might, having equal pretence of Merit, enjoy equal Privileges with himſelf.

Thirdly, The occaſions of War and Law-Suits would be taken away. Since nothing but manifeſt wrong can be the juſt cauſe of either.

And *Fourthly*, There would be no private Quarrels, and uneaſineſs among Neighbours; ſince by this Rule of doing as we would be done unto, all raſh Cenſures, ſharp Reflections, and ungrounded Suſpicions

ons and Jealouſies, which are the Seeds of private Animoſities, are taken away. And hereby we may expect a plentiful ſtore of God's Bleſſings among us; who will meaſure out his kindneſs to us in the ſame manner as we meaſure out ours to one another.

The reaſon why Religion ſhould be both a ſhort and plain inſtitution, will appear if you conſider the common Circumſtances and Conditions of Men in this World. For though your Ladyſhip and many more, have leiſure enough to read and digeſt whole Volumes of uſeful Knowledge (if there are any ſuch) yet the greateſt part of Mankind being neceſſarily imploy'd in making daily Proviſions for themſelves and Families, and diſcharging the common Offices of Life, cannot attend to any religious Inſtitution which is either difficult or tedious. 'Tis

'Tis certain, That the whole Life of Man is not ſufficient for him to read all the Controverſies which have been written upon pretence of Religion; but 'tis as certain, That God never lays on us a greater Task than what he affords us both Abilities and Opportunities to perform: wherefore we may conclude, That ſince the Duties of Religion are laid in common upon all, the poor Day-Labourer muſt have ability and opportunity ſufficient to inſtruct himſelf therein, without hindering the conſtant work of his Calling. And in all this the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God are made known, by adapting our Duties to our circumſtances of Life.

From hence you may ſave your ſelf the trouble of reading the long and tedious Diſputes, which with ſuch intemperate Zeal are always

in

in agitation among the ſeveral Parties of Chriſtians. Indeed the true Chriſtian Inſtitution being ſhort, it cannot admit of being ſpun out into long Controverſies: And tho' I have read many Books of Controverſial Divinity, I do not remember that I have met with any one Controverſy about the matter of *meer* Religion; as whether I ſhould maintain in my Heart a high reverence and veneration for Almighty God? Whether I ought to walk before him in Sincerity and Uprightneſs? Whether or no I ſhould be thankful to him for all the Benefits which I have receiv'd from him? Whether I ſhall ſubmit to his Will with Patience, and endeavour to govern my Paſſions, to bring them to a due moderation and temper, by making them ſubject to the Law of Reaſon? Whether I ſhould be true to my Promiſe, juſt in my Dealings, charitable

ritable to the Poor, and ſincere in my Devotions? Whether I ſhould be temperate and ſober, modeſt and chaſte, and demean my ſelf in an humble, civil, and agreeable manner towards thoſe with whom I converſe? Whether I ſhould be heartily ſorry when I come ſhort of my Duty, and ſhould be watchful in the denial of my irregular Appetites, Paſſions, and evil Inclinations for the future? In ſhort it has not (that I know of) been diſputed whether Juſtice, Benignity, Meekneſs, Charity, Moderation, Patience, and Sobriety, ſhould be receiv'd into our Affections? Or whether we ſhould love God and our Neighbour? *Orthodoxy of Faith* is made the pretence of Controverſy, but the one thing neceſſary is *Orthodoxy of Practice.*

I know your Ladyſhip will not be pleas'd with a Diſcourſe upon the

the ſubject of Religion, unleſs Devotion have its due place in it; nor ought it indeed to be left out, becauſe Thankfulneſs is a neceſſary *part* of Religion, and Prayer is the *Preſervative* of the whole. A frequent repetition of our Thanks for all the Benefits we enjoy, preſerves in our Minds the conſideration of God, as the greateſt and beſt of Beings; and thereby nouriſhes Veneration and Gratitude. In like manner Prayer for Pardon of Sin, and preſervation of our Perſons, is a conſtant Recognition of the Mercy and Bounty of God. But Prayer againſt the Power of Sin, is the actual withdrawing of our Inclinations from Evil; and Prayer for any Grace is an actual application of our Minds, to attain the particular Virtue for which we pray.

Now

Now although I would not adviſe you againſt ſet Hours and Forms of Devotion, either private or publick; yet I would rather recommend a ſort of habitual and occaſional Devotion, as very proper to preſerve the ſtrongeſt Impreſſions of Religion upon your Mind.

It may be obſerv'd, that many who are very punctual in keeping to their exact times and forms of Devotion, have fallen ſhort of any viſible improvement in Virtue. The ſame Pride, Frowardneſs, Falſhood, Covetouſneſs, and bitterneſs of Spirit, have appear'd in many who have been conſtant frequenters of the Publick as well as Cloſet Forms of Prayer; as if God had not been in all their Thoughts. The reaſon whereof ſeems to be becauſe their formal Petitions ſupercede

percede their habitual Endeavours. Men are apt to think, that ſince they ſpend in every Day ſuch a portion of Time in Prayer, they have done all their part: And ſo they leave God Almighty to take care of the event. And this is indeed all we can do when we make our Petitions to our Benefactors upon Earth, *viz.* offer up our Requeſts to them, either by Word or Writing, and then only expect their Anſwer.

But 'tis otherwiſe with relation to God. Our Petitions to him muſt not take off from our conſtant Endeavours to perform that Work for which we pray his Enablement. And this occaſional Devotion, which I would recommend, is in its own nature a conſtant endeavour after Virtue, as well as a ſerious Petition for it. For it ariſeth from a frequent obſervation

of our ſelves in our particular occurring Circumſtances; from which obſervation ſuitable deſires will almoſt neceſſarily flow. As if at any time I find that I have done an ill thing, immediately upon the diſcovery, I beg God's Pardon, and reſolve to make recompence for the ill I have done. Or if I have deſign'd any Evil in my Heart, and preſently beg Pardon of him who knoweth the Secrets thereof; in ſo doing I have given check to its progreſs. In like manner, if I have ſpoken ſlanderouſly, raſhly, or injuriouſly concerning any one; and upon Recollection thereof I ask forgiveneſs of God, and deſire that I may not do the like for the future: but on the contrary, that I may govern my Tongue better; in all this I am labouring to withdraw my Soul from evil, and to form my ſelf upon a principle of Virtue. Every

Every Night and Morning are proper times of leiſure to call to Mind the Preſervation, Support, and Advantages we have receiv'd the Day or Night preceding. And this Recollection being accompany'd with Thankfulneſs to our Great Preſerver, is the actual continuance and carrying on of our Gratitude to God. If I perceive Pride or Paſſion to ariſe in my heart, ſo that I am apt to put a great value upon every thing I do, and deſpiſe others: or if I find my ſelf eagerly concern'd for any little worldly Advantage, or any ſmall punctilio of Honour; and hereupon I beg of God for an humble Spirit, and a heavenly Mind; I am herein endeavouring to expel the Poiſon of Sin by its proper Antidote.

We cannot but feel the Diſorders of our Minds, as much as the Diſeaſes of our Bodies. And the Cauſes of a diſorder'd Mind are much more eaſily diſcern'd, than the Cauſes of a bodily Diſtemper. For either my Mind is troubl'd for Want or Loſſes, or it may be for the Proſperity of others, or want of a Revenge, or becauſe I cannot have my Will in what I deſign'd. Upon theſe or ſuch like Occaſions, the proper Cure is Devotional, in begging God's Pardon for my Diſcontent: and being deſirous that my Will ſhould be ſubmitted to his, who has taught me that I ſhould not return Evil for Evil, but that I ſhould love my Neighbour as my ſelf. This ſort of Soliloquy, and occaſional mental Addreſs to God, is a ſure way to compoſe the Diſorders of our Thoughts. For the growing Power of

of any Sin, is moſt certainly ſuppreſs'd by introducing the oppoſite Virtue into our Deſires.

The ſame Method may be uſed as to Sins of Omiſſion. A ſerious Perſon will obſerve Neglects of common Duties, which reſpect either God or Man. He cannot but take notice how much he has neglected his Buſineſs, or his Health; how little he has conſider'd God as his Owner, Governour, and Benefactor?-and how ſmall a Portion of what God has bleſs'd him with he has laid out upon the Good of his Fellow-Creatures. And if hereupon a Man is ſeriouſly deſirous to become more dutiful to God, more uſeful to himſelf, and beneficial to others, he is therein actually bending his Mind to ſupply his former Omiſſions.

This casual Devotion arising from the observation of our selves, under the common circumstances of Life (although it can have no set Times and Forms prescrib'd to it) will be very effectual to produce preserve, and increase a true sense of Religion within us. And if you are pleas'd to apply your Thoughts hereunto, as occasion shall direct you, this Devotion will soon become habitual, customary and easie. And its returns, which will be frequent and short, will be a continual Restraint from evil-doing, and an actual Exercise of Virtue.

This Exercise which I have been prescribing, is commonly reserv'd to be perform'd all at once, in an actual Preparation before receiving the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*; which is usually perform'd by help

help of an artificial Catalogue of Sins methodically collected out of the Ten Commandments, according to which Catalogue, set Forms of Confessions are drawn up, which the Preparant is to take upon Content, and without any sort of Judgment or Discretion of his own, he confesses himself guilty of all the Sins therein mention'd together, with all their Aggravations, though, it may be, many of them were of such a heinous nature, as never enter'd into his heart to commit. And if these Catalogues and confessional Forms are read over once a quarter of a Year, or, it may be, once a Month against the usual Sacrament-Day, the Work of Preparation is thought to be well pass'd over.

Yet I cannot but think it better to keep a constant customary Watch over our selves, and upon

the firſt diſcovery of any evil Deſign or Action, immediately to retract it within our own hearts, as in the preſence of God, and by mental Prayer, proper to the occaſion, arm our ſelves againſt committing the like for the future. Hereby you diſcharge a Duty in its proper Seaſon, which is better than to delay it to a prefix'd diſtance of time: for what is moſt freſh in Memory, will make the moſt lively Impreſſion upon us; but may in a little time be forgotten. Beſides, we are apt to turn Forms into Formalities: And a natural diſcharge of religious Duties muſt be more improving than an artificial one.

And by this your Ladyſhip ſees the Reaſon why I have Written a Diſcourſe of *Religion* in general, in Anſwer to your Letter, wherein you wrote only concerning the *Lord's*

Lord's Supper, *viz.* becauſe I eſteem a ſerious well-inclin'd temper of Mind to be the beſt Preparation, either for that, or any other of the Ordinances of Jeſus Chriſt, that we may partake of 'em with Advantage and Delight.

David adviſes us to delight our ſelves in the Lord, *i. e.* in all his Ways and Ordinances. And I cannot ſee why our Preparation for the Lord's Table, and Participation at it, ſhould be accompany'd with greater Anxieties of Mind than our Communicating in any other holy Office; ſuch as publick Prayer or Preaching. We expect the ſame Bleſſing of God in the Improvement of our Virtues from all of theſe Ordinances alike. And why with Terrour upon our Minds we ſhould uſe any of thoſe Means which God has ordain'd for our Good, I do not underſtand. A Man

indeed ought to perform every religious Office seriously and soberly; but Fear by amusing and distracting the Mind, is apt to render the Ordinance unprofitable.

Men ought likewise to be discourag'd from coming to Prayer, Preaching or Communicating at the Lord's Table, with a careless, or profane Temper of Mind: because such unpreparedness does harden Mens hearts, and renders the Ordinance unprofitable. Such as this was the Case of the *Corinthians*, who in Celebrating the Lord's Supper, were so inconsiderate of what they came to do, that some of them were *drunk* at the Lord's Table, as you read 1 *Cor.* 11.21. and to this their prophane Behaviour, those Texts of Scripture do particularly relate, which affright some Men from, and others in receiving the Sacrament: On this

this Account 'twas ſaid, by St. *Paul*, *that they were guilty of the body and blood of Chriſt: and to eat and drink damnation to themſelves, not diſcerning the Lord's body*, ver. 27, 29. *i.e.* by ſuch a profane and unworthy Communicating, they call down God's *Judgments* upon themſelves: for ſo the Word *Damnation* ought to be underſtood, becauſe it refers to the *Judgments* ſpecify'd in the following Verſe, where 'tis ſaid, that, *For this cauſe* (*viz.* of drunken Communicating) *many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep*, i. e. *die.* v. 30. Now to avoid theſe *Judgments* he exhorts them to *examine themſelves*, i. e. to conſider with themſelves what was the meaning of that Duty which they were to perform at the Lord's Table, which Duty was this, *viz.* to call to mind the Death of Jeſus Chriſt,

Christ. And this Commemoration is by St. *Paul* stil'd *Discerning the Lord's body.*

The visible Signs of our Saviour's Death, which we discern on the Lord's Table, do prepare our Minds to contemplate a divine Person, who for his great Charity to the stupid World, suffer'd the highest Injustice, with such an invincible Patience, and Heroick Fortitude, as was superiour to the sharpest Malice of his Enemies. Thereby setting before us the brightest Example of an unshaken Resolution, to do Good in spight of all Discouragements.

You will perceive, Madam, by this Discourse, that the Christian Religion is a wise, a plain, and a short Institution; the Belief whereof was design'd to save our Souls

Souls from the power and danger of Sin, by ingrafting virtuous habits in our Minds. You will likewise perceive, that I hold it neceſſary to keep a conſtant Watch over our ſelves, to repent as often as we perceive our ſelves to tranſgreſs, and by occaſional mental Devotion, incline our hearts to obſerve the Law of Chriſt; and all this in order to build up a Habit of Virtue within us. You will alſo perceive, that the Contemplation of the Death of Chriſt, with all its Circumſtances, tends to the ſame admirable End.

And if theſe or any other means ſhall work upon you to be generouſly juſt, to bear a good Will to all Men, to do what Good you can, and to be unconcern'd for the Events of things which are not within your Power; you will be

be easie within your self, and satisfy'd in your own Conscience, which is the Dawn of Heaven upon Earth; and you may chearfully Communicate at any time.

THE

THE SECOND LETTER.

MADAM,

HAving lately been in Converſation with a Lady of your Acquaintance, ſhe took occaſion to ſpeak concerning the Letter I wrote to your Ladyſhip; which was publiſhed a few Years ſince under the Title of *A Lady's Religion.* She was pleas'd to favour me ſo far as to ſay, that the Letter did contain a good moral Doctrine: But ſhe thought it a blameable Omiſſion in me, to paſs over in ſilence thoſe many Doctrines of the *Chriſtian Faith*, which

which she thought of absolute necessity to our Salvation. To this Objection I reply'd, That my design in writing the Letter of *Religion* to your Ladyship, was only to recommend the Moral Law of our Lord *Jesus Christ* from its *own intrinsick worth*, which appears in those many and great Advantages, which the serious Practice thereof would certainly confer upon Mankind. Not intending thereby, to diminish ought from the Doctrine of the *Christian Faith*, which is therefore *worthy of all Acceptation*; because 'tis a means to enforce the Gospel moral upon our Practice. Upon which account it is truly said *to save our Souls*, since it promotes our ready Obedience to the *Evangelical Law* of *our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*. And for this Reason it was that I advis'd your Ladyship, not to perplex your Thoughts with those Doctrines of

Faith

Faith which are of a myſterious Nature; for that ſuch Doctrines which we cannot well *underſtand* cannot well be apply'd either as *Motives* or *Means*, to engage us in practical Duties. This Reply had the good Fortune to give the Lady ſome ſatisfaction as to this Point; but preſently ſhe objected to me another Omiſſion, which (ſhe thought) was of greater Conſequence than the former. For *Solomon* of old (ſaid ſhe) recommended the *fear of God* as a *fundamental* of Religion. Our Saviour *Chriſt* too puts us in mind of *the worm which never dies*. And St. *Paul* (if I miſtake not) makes uſe of the *terrours of the Lord to perſwade men* to Righteouſneſs. But you (ſaid ſhe) in your Letter to my worthy Friend, have not only omitted this fundamenral Point; but in ſome meaſure diſcouraged her as to that part of Religion which

which consists in Fear, in saying, That *Fear by amusing and distracting the mind, is apt to render God's Ordinance unprofitable.*

La. Rel. P. 34.

All that I reply'd at that time was, That *Solomon* meant no more than only to say, that the *Fear* (or *Dread*) of God was *introductory* to Religion; *the fear of God* (said he) *is the Beginning of Wisdome.* Prov. 9. 10. But he did not esteem the Fear of that sort as any *Part* of Religion; for as much as every Duty which is acceptable to God, must arise from our *love* to him, which is the only Spring and Fountain from whence all truly religious Performances can flow: And which fails not to cast out all sort of Fear, except that filial and legitimate kind which it self naturally produceth. And in this manner (said I) that great Sage in *Israel*, *Jesus* the Son of *Sirack* explained himself

ſelf hereupon in his Book of *Eccleſticus*, chap. 25. ver. 11, 12. *The love of the Lord paſſeth all things for illumination.* That is, true Religion gives the beſt Light and Direction to humane Underſtanding. And then it follows, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of his love.* That is, the Fear of God will prepare us for that Love of God, which by its *Illumination* will direct and encourage us in the Duties of Religion.

To this Quotation I added the Reaſon of the thing, by appealing to her own Judgment, whether ſhe would not eſteem a Service done to her by her Children, her Relations, or even her Servants, out of a Principle of *Love*, much better than ſuch Services which ariſe only from *Fear*. Nay, I asked, if a real *Benefit* which was done

to

to her out of *no good Will* could be ſo much as Thank-worthy.

But theſe Replies gave her no Satisfaction; becauſe the Book *Eccleſiaſticus* was *Apocryphal*; and becauſe Compariſons ought not to be alledg'd for Proofs, but ſhould be uſed only for Illuſtration.

Wherefore ſhe deſired me to give her better Satisfaction in the Point of *Fear*, as to what part it ſuſtains in the Affair of *Religion*, which reaſonable Command laid on me by her, gave occaſion to the following Diſcourſe, which I take the liberty to addreſs to your Ladyſhip in this preſent Letter: it being not grounded upon the Authority of any *Apocryphal* Writer, but of St. *John* the *Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt*; whoſe Words are theſe, 1 Joh. 4. 18. *There is no fear in love, but perfect love caſteth out fear, becauſe*

becauſe fear hath torment, he that feareth is not made perfect by love.

But ſince *Fear*, as well as *Love* and all the other Paſſions, is fixed originally in human Nature, it may juſtly ſeem ſomewhat ſtrange to your Ladyſhip, that any thing ſhould be ſuppos'd capable of *caſting it out*. For ſhould Fear or any other Paſſion be ejected or eraſed from the Soul, Humane Nature would appear imperfect: For as much as every Paſſion ſerves to a proper uſe and deſign in the Frame of Man. Thus *Fear* gives a Check to raſh Proceedings, and *Hope* gives Courage to attempt any good Deſign tho' difficult to be accompliſhed. *Hatred* makes the Soul to ſtart at the appearance of Evil, whilſt *Love* joyns it to its trueſt Intereſt, and produceth *Joy* in the conſtant purſuit of what is good. *Sadneſs* diſcovers to us the Vanity of

of insatiable Desires, and unreasonable Expectations. And *Anger* stands like a bold Sentinel with Sword in Hand, to keep insolent Behaviour at a distance. Surely these Springs of Motion which God hath placed in the Soul, for the prosecuting of good Ends, and avoiding Evil, cannot be *cast out*. Or if any of 'em were excluded, some Scar or Imperfection in the humane Temper would be left behind.

Indeed if any of them exceed their proper Bounds, so that they become malignant, or at least burdensome to Nature; we have reason to reduce them within their just limits. Or if one of them takes upon him to discharge the Office which of right belongeth to another, (as a Man may hate what he should love, and rejoyce when he should weep) it ought to be

be *caſt out* of that unnatural Uſurpation, and the proper Affection ought to be reſtored to its rightful Function, as in the Caſe alledged by St. *John* in that place upon which I ground my Argument. If *Fear* ſhall take upon it ſelf to be the *Spring-head* of all our Reverence for Deity, and of our Obedience to the divine Will; in ſuch a Caſe the Soul ought to be reſcued from the bondage of Fear, and be ſubjected to the rightful Sway of Love: to which affection it owes its natural Allegiance. For whenſoever a Soul is impregnate with a ſincere love to God, it will not endure to be engaged in the performance of its Duty by Fear, but will caſt off its Yoke, and abhor its Uſurpation. And in this ſenſe Madam I take it, That *Perfect love caſteth out fear.*

But ſince 'tis not in the power of Love totally to extinguiſh the paſſion of Fear, but all it pretends to, is only to confine it within its proper Bounds, ſo that it may not intrude it ſelf into the Sphere of Love. I ſhall from hence take occaſion to ſet forth to your Ladyſhip, (1) What Fear of God is conſiſtent with the Love of God, and what is caſt out thereby. (2) What Fear of Man is conſiſtent with divine Love, and what is caſt out by it. And (3) What Fear of Hell is conſiſtent therewith, and what is not.

I. As to the firſt of theſe Particulars 'tis evident, that whoſoever ſuppoſeth God to be *an Eternal Spirit, without Body, Parts, or Paſſions; of infinite Power, Wiſdome, and Goodneſs, the Maker and Preſerver of all things*; (as our Church in her firſt Article deſcribes him)

him) and hereupon has form'd himself upon a Principle of high Esteem and humble Affection, as also of Love and Gratitude to his great Owner, Governour, and Benefactor; cannot but be affected with a reverential Awe, and Fear of misbehaving himself in the Presence of God. Such a one will fear the Lord of Heaven and Earth, walking humbly before him; and thro' a watchful Denyal of himself, he will hold no Confederacy with any known Sin. Nor will he dare to do an unjust Action, tho' never so much to his advantage. And all this, because he fears to offend him whom he loves, and esteems as the Fountain of all Good.

According to this Notion, good Men have been call'd the *Children of God*; with respect to the dutiful behaviour of an obedient Child

to an indulgent Father. For by how much ſuch a one is ſenſible of the tender Affection his Parent bears to him, by how much the more ſenſible he is that all his preſent Enjoyments and Hopes of future Advantage, are deriv'd from the conſtant loving Diſpoſition of his Parent, ſo much the more will he indulge within himſelf a conſtant Fear of offending. But then this Fear hath *no Torment*, neither is it impoſed upon the Child, but is his own free Choice, his Joy, and Satisfaction; and always increaſing in proportion, to the Love he bears to his Father.

But on the contrary, *Madam*, Fear which *hath Torment*, ſuch as St. *John* ſpeaketh of will be *caſt out* by a Love to God. For when with Delight we ſee that the World is conſtantly ſupported by the divine Bounty; why ſhould we ſuf-

fer

fer our ſelves to be tormented with anxious Cares and Fears for Food and Raiment? Which two things in conjunction are a ſufficient Fund of Contentment, according to a univerſal Rule of Reaſon laid down by St. *Paul*, *Having Food and Raiment let us be therewith content.* 1 *Tim.* 6. 8.

Inconſiſtent therefore with the Love of God, is ſuch a Fear as is *Selfiſh.* Where the Smart of Puniſhment for Sin is dreaded, more than the Diſpleaſure of God. In the Spirit of this *ſlaviſh* Fear, *Pharaoh* made ſome faint Reſolutions, to ſet an enthralled People at liberty: But as ſoon as the Smart of God's Rod was allay'd he recover'd his former Cruelty, and reſolved to perpetuate their Bondage. Thus a Wolf or Lyon, under the immediate Diſcipline of a ſevere Keeper, holding the Rod of Correction in

his Hand; may suffer a Lamb to lye safely within his reach; but this Abstinence from present Rapine changes not the Nature of the Beast. The one is not less a Wolf, nor the other less a Lyon, than at other times.

Besides *Madam*, there is this great Inconsistency between the Love of God, and such a slavish Fear as has been now describ'd, that he who loveth God will take Delight and high Satisfaction, in Contemplation of the Divine Power, Wisdome and Goodness; but he who serveth God out of a Principle of slavish Fear, which always compells him to act contrary to his Inclination, can take no delight in the Contemplation of God. But rather wisheth that there were *no knowledge in the most high* to discern, or no Power to punish. In this respect 'tis, that *the fool hath said in his heart there*

there is no God: the *fool* is a wicked Man; the Language of the *Heart* is Desire. So that the plain Sense of that Saying is, that an ill-inclin'd Man, wisheth that there were no God.

But if you will consider *Deity* as 'twas describ'd by the Philosophers of old, you will find the Divine Nature set forth in the most lively manner by *Pythagoras* as he is cited by *Justin Martyr* in his Exhortation to the *Greeks*. Thus: *God is surely one, nor is he resident (as some imagine) without the Structure of the Universe, but is intire within himself: surveying all Generations in a compleat Circle. He is the Temperament of all Ages, the Agent of his own Powers and Works: The Principle of all things individual: The Light of the Heavens, and the Parent of all: The Life and Animation of every Creature: The Motion of all*

Succeſſions and Alterations. I was ſaying, that if you ſhall thus conſider Deity as the vital Spirit of the Univerſe, you will find ſufficient Engagements to the Love thereof, from every Obſervation you will make upon Nature. Upon this Conſideration of Deity it may be ſaid, That *the Heavens declare the glory of God, and the Firmament ſhews his handy-work.* Pſ. 19. 1. And what ſort of Affections can this *Declaration* of Heaven and Earth raiſe in the Temper of Man beſides Eſteem, Complacency, and Gratitude? Which being put together, make up that Compoſition of *Love*, which *caſteth out Fear.*

'Tis this Contemplation of Nature, Madam, 'tis this cloſe Obſervation of that Subſerviency which the inferiour and ſmaller Syſtems of natural Beings, pay to the greater and ſuperiour, which raiſes

raiſes an high Eſteem for the wonderful Artificer, by whom *all things live and move and have their Beings:* By whom every Office of Senſation is performed: So that we may *taſte and ſee how good the Lord is:* Pſ. 34. 8. And from thence conclude by ſenſible Demonſtration, that all *Delight* is the Creature of Deity, continually obliging us to a comfortable participation of divine Bounty, and thereby to a conſtant Return of Praiſe and Thanks.

And if that ſmall Portion of experimental knowledge in the Wiſdome, Power, and Goodneſs of God, to which in this life we may attain; can raiſe us to ſuch a ſincere Love of God as can expel all the Torment of Fear; ſurely an eternal progreſſive knowledge of that inexhauſtible Subject, may be eſteem'd an eternal Fountain of Delight.

But at preſent, what umbrage can be given to fear from the Contemplation of Deity? Can that divine Wiſdom by which all things are contriv'd for our uſe, or that divine Power by which all things are ſupported for our conſtant Satisfaction, ſuffer any one to give way to ſuperſtitious Fears? As if Deity were auſtere and rigorous, eaſily provoked by ſome ſmall, and perhaps unavoidable Miſtakes of Creatures; and as eaſily appeas'd with ſome ſlight Formalities, and external Performances.

This falſe Idea of Deity, Madam, cannot be gathered up from your obſervation of Nature; but muſt ariſe from that narrow, and froward Temper, which the weaker ſort of Men too frequently feel within themſelves. And altho' the wiſe *Solomon* built an houſe for the Lord,

Lord, which was *accepted* of God, as all the *Jewish* Rites were, thro' divine Condescension; yet St. *Stephen* speaking of that Temple, makes this Observation thereupon. *Howbeit the most high dwelleth not in Temples, as saith the Prophet, Heaven is my Throne, and Earth is my Footstool, what house will ye build me, saith the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? hath not my hand made all these things?* Act. 7. 48. In like manner, although thro' the same Condescension God *accepted* the Sacrifices of *Israel*, yet the *Prophets* bare Witness that he did not *require or command* those Services. Indeed this appears in the very beginning of the *Levitical* Book of *Moses* where 'tis thus written: *And the lord called to Moses out of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, if any man of you bring*

an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattel, even of the herd, and of the flock. If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own voluntary will *at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation before the Lord*, Lev. 1. 1. *&c.* So that Sacrifices seem to be as much a humane as a divine Institution. And it may without any absurdity be supposed, that *Cain* and *Abel* or any ancient Inhabitants of the World, might appoint some certain Day to joyn their Stores together, to the intent that they and their Families, might *eat and drink to the glory of God*, as St. *Paul* speaks. 1 Cor. 10. 31. i. e. whilst they were partakers at a plentiful Table, they might express their Thanks to God who furnished it out for them. 'Tis possible also, that the original design of this

Thanks-

Thanksgiving-Feſtival might in after-times be forgotten by Poſterity, who might yet retain the Cuſtom of *Sacrificing* upon a miſtaken ſuppoſal that the ſolemn Slaughter of their Cattel was a thing well-pleaſing to God; becauſe it was (as to them it ſeem'd) a religious Obſervation of their Fore-Fathers. And from hence it might come, that *Sacrifices and Offerings* were once the Catholick Religion of the World. But for an unprejudiced Perſon to conceive that the Deity ſhould be pleas'd with the Slaughter of *Hecatombs*, is a ſuppoſition of a ſtrange Nature. And whence could it ariſe, but from the miſleading of *Fear*, which induced weak Men to believe, that God being angry with them for their Sins, muſt have his Anger appeaſed by the ſlaughter of Beaſts, that he may be prevailed upon to ſpare the Lives of Men.

Now

Now to give your Ladyſhip a general account, how this Matter ſtood of old; as far as I can reach into Antiquity, it appears that *Fear* gave to Mankind one moiety of their Notion of God. For 'twas generally believed of old, that *Deity* was made up of *two coordinate Powers*; the one for Good; the other for Evil. And 'tis a long time paſt, ſince Men's Fancies found out Names for the chymerical Objects of their Fears. So of old the *Hebrews* call'd theſe two coordinate Principles by the Names of *Gad* and *Meni*. The *Egyptians* call'd them *Oſyris* and *Typhon*. In the *Greek* Inſcriptions upon Funeral *Urns* are frequently met the Lettes Θ: K: the initial Letters of Θεοῖς Κακοῖς the unlucky Gods. The *Romans* expreſſed the ſame thing by *Joves* and *Væjoves*; hard Names which

I am forc'd to trouble your Ladyship with. And the Astrologers carry on the same Notion to this Day, under the Style of favourable and malignant Aspects. I cannot tell how long it is since the *Persians* received this Opinion under the Names of *Oromasdes* and *Arimanius*; but it may be computed how long 'tis since *Manes Manichæus*, a *Persian* by Birth, and a *Christian* by Profession, revived that ancient Opinion of the *Persians*, which by the Christians of that Age, was called the *Manichæan Heresy*; and was a Belief of two coordinate supreme Powers, the one good, the other evil. This Heresy was first broached in the Reign of *Aurelian* the Emperor; and in the Year of our Lord 273.

Doubtless, 'twas the prevailing Power of Fear, which armed *Jupiter* with his Thunderbolt, *Mars* with

with his Spear, and *Apollo* with his Bow. And what can your Ladyſhip think of thoſe Parents who forc'd their Children to *paſs through the Fire to Molech*, though it were only to ſcorch their Skins, which is the mildeſt Interpretation of thoſe Words of *Moſes* whereby that ſort of Cruelty was forbidden, *Levit.* 18. 21. What can your Ladyſhip think of thoſe Parents, but that they were ſcared out of their Wits? And what Opinion can you conceive of thoſe Parents who burnt their Children to *Adramelech* and *Anamelech* the Gods of *Sephervaim*, 2 *Kings* 17.31. but that they were frightned out of all ſenſe of Humanity. For, what can be diſcovered in the Philoſophick Notion of *Deity*, which may give Umbrage to ſuch enormous ſuperſtitious Fears? But on the other hand, might not *Pythagoras* well be ſtyled a divine Philoſo-

Philoſopher, who came into *Italy* in the Reign of *Tarquinius Superbus* (as *Cicero* informs us) to give the then Barbarous people, ſuch a true Notion of Deity, as might diſſipate all ſuperſtitious Fears, and afford a ſolid Comfort? For if Deity be no other than the vital Spirit of the Univerſe, and common Parent of Mankind, Reverence, Love and Gratitude, become due from Man to God: And *Pythagoras* might well ask the Queſtion, why Men invented *Spectres* to frighten themſelves withal. As *Ovid* repreſents him ſpeaking:

Quid Styga, quid tenebras, & nomina vana timetis?

And for the ſame Reaſon was it, *Madam*, that *Moſes* commanded the *Jews* to bring their Sacrifices to the Door of the *Tabernacle*, viz. that

that they might not be offer'd to fearful Objects, which the Scripture call *Devils*. *They ſhall no more offer their Sacrifice to Devils*, *Lev.* 17. 7. Upon which Text it may be obſerved, that the original Word which in our Tranſlation is rendred *Devils*, is by *Latin* Interpreters ſet forth by moſt odious, frightful, and horrid Ideas. Such as *piloſi*, *villoſi*, *hirſuti*, *hirci*, *Satyri*, *horridi*, *horrifici*. And particularly *Bochart* in his Treatiſe upon the *Animals* mentioned in the Old Teſtament, commenting upon this Text of *Moſes*, ſays, That this Word which we tranſlate *Devils*, was given as a Name to the Idols of *Canaan*, *quod horripilationem iis incutiunt quibus apparent*; i. e. Becauſe their Figures were ſo terrible, that a Man's Hair would ſtand an end at their Appearance. And whoever will read the Chapter laſt cited, will find

Moſes

Moſes preventing *Pythagoras* in his Deſign of diſſwading Men from entertaining a frightful Idea of Deity; and commanding that ſince Sacrifices were the Worſhip then in uſe, his Countrymen ſhould thereby, pay their Homage to that God, whoſe Character was *Gracious and Merciful*, the great *Deliverer* of that particular People, and one who ſtill reſerved a particular kindneſs for them. This Character is in its Nature fitted to raiſe Veneration, Love, and Hope; but Fear is an unbecoming Treatment of ſuch a Deity.

And yet behold, *Madam*, a greater than *Pythagoras* is here. I mean St. *John*, who in his Epiſtle which at firſt I cited, ſets forth the Character of God, by the Ideas of *Light* and *Love*, 1 *Joh.* 1. 5. *God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all.* And in another place he gives the

the most amiable Character of Deity, saying, That *God is Love*, 1 *Joh.* 4. 8.

As to the first of these two Characters of God, that illustrious one of Light, you cannot suppose it to be an Object of *Fear*, but rather of *Comfort* and *Joy*; for as much as the Morning light has been always observed, to dispel those Fears which have been occasioned by the foregoing Darkness; 'tis this daily flowing Tide of Brightness, which tinctures the Earth with its Glory, rendering it thereby, both useful and delightful to Mankind. On the contrary, how dreadful was it once for the *Egyptians* to sit under that thick Mist of palpable Darkness, which blotted out three whole Days? In how melancholy a manner did they pass away their time, when *they saw not one another, neither arose*

aroſe any one from his place? Exod. 10. 23. But how joyful an Hour was that wherein the Sun aroſe to diſpel the Horrour they had ſo long lain under? And look! what Light is to the Eye, that ſame thing is Knowledge to the Mind. The Inſtruction of God is as delightful and refreſhing to the Soul, as the riſing Sun to a Traveller, who has been beating out his way all Night. By Divine Inſtruction a Man finds a plain way through the World, notwithſtanding all the By-paths of Fancy and Perſwaſion; hereby he ſums up the whole of religious Duty in Reverence for God, Care over our ſelves, and Kindneſs to our Fellow-Creatures: each part whereof is delightful and recreative to the Spirit of Man. Reverence for the Deity is the Priviledge of Man above the Beaſt, which knows not that he is in the Care and

and Keeping of God. But 'tis the Glory of Man to know and acknowledge his gracious Owner, Governour and Benefactor.

As to the other two ſummary Parts of Divine Inſtruction, Care over our ſelves, and Kindneſs to our Fellow-Creatures, the Performance of thoſe Duties, carries nothing in it of Fear or Torment, but is pleaſant as *Light to the Eye and Marrow to the Bones.* The firſt of theſe two Duties is preſervative of Soul and Body, from the diſmal Effects which unruly Paſſion, and ungoverned Appetite too frequently produce. And as 'tis a horrid Spectacle to behold a Man out of the uſe of himſelf, as to have ſeen *Saul breathing out threatnings, and ſlaughter againſt the Diſciples of the Lord, making havock of the Church, entering into every houſe, haling men and women and committing*

ting them to priſon. Act. 8. 8. So on the contrary, how pleaſing muſt it have been to have ſeen his *labours of love:* to have been a Witneſs of his *wearineſs and painfulneſs, his often watchings, his hunger and thirſt, his cold and nakedneſs,* by reaſon of his *great care of all the Churches which came upon him daily,* 1 *Cor.* 11.

Beſides, let any one but conſult his own Experience, and ſee if there be any thing frightful or tormenting, in being conſcious of his own good Will and Affection to Mankind; or in being conſcious of the merited Love and Eſteem which he has gain'd from others thereby. And let a Man examine himſelf if there be any pleaſure which the World affords equal to the Satisfaction he receives from relieving the Neceſſities of his Fellow-Creatures, according to the Inſtruction of God.

But

But on the other hand, where unwarranted Traditions, and vain Imaginations of Men prevail over the Light of God, the Minds of Men will be perplexed with dark Suſpicions, and tormenting Fears. As for Inſtance, if it be not certain that St. *Peter* was at *Rome*, all the Pretences which uphold the *Roman Catholick Communion* fall to the Ground: Then there is no Succeſſor in Power with the Keys of Heaven, nor any infallible Apoſtolical Commiſſioner to guide the Flock of Chriſt. And that St. *Peter* ever was at *Rome* is no part of Divine Inſtruction. Now ſince this great, and as they pretend, Univerſal Flock of Chriſt are uncertain of their Guide, how muſt their Doubts and Fears multiply upon them, in relation to the way they ought to take? What Security can they have, that the Pardons

dons and Indulgencies granted by the *Holy Father* are ratifi'd in Heaven? What Security that their Pilgrimages, Penances, Maſſes, with their Adoration of a God bak'd in an Oven, and ſuch like Inventions of their *High Prieſt*, ſhall be accepted by the greateſt and beſt of Beings? How ſhall they be ſure that they walk not in the Paths of Darkneſs, but that they are the *Children of light*, drawing towards the *Inheritance of the Saints in Glory?* But when a Man hath a ſincere Reſpect to the Light and Inſtruction of God, he will thereby be made free from all thoſe Uncertainties, Jealouſies and Fears, which torment the Minds of the Superſtitious.

Now *Madam*, if hereupon you ſhould ask how you ſhall know, that the Books of Scripture contain'd in the Old and New Teſtament

ſtament are the real true Light and Inſtruction of God; I think you may eaſily ſatisfie your ſelf as to that Matter. For though many particular Texts therein contained cannot be nicely underſtood without ſome knowledge of ancient Cuſtoms, to which the Expreſſions allude; yet without any ancient or modern Learning, let any one take a View of the whole *Analogy*, and ſuitable Agreement of the Doctrines contain'd in both Teſtaments, and he will find that the Deſign of all thoſe Writers was, to ſet forth ſuch an admirable Rule of Life as was fit for God to give, and for Man to receive. And if you will compare this moral Inſtruction with the Superſtitions of Heathens or Papiſts, your Eye cannot diſcern the difference between the Light of Sun and Moon more clearly, than your Mind will diſtinguiſh between

between Religion and Superſtition.

Thoſe Holy Books contain nothing of *Popery* or *Prieſtcraft*, or of any other Deſign, but only to direct us to ſuch Ways and Means, as are beſt fitted to work up Human Nature to the higheſt degree of Virtue it is capable of in this Life. And therefore whoſoever ſhall endeavour to aſſert any low, ſelf-deſigning Opinion from Holy Writ, is the greateſt Enemy thereunto. For as much as every mean baſe ſelfiſh Opinion, or any ſuch Doctrine which is contrary to the common Rights, Liberties, or Advantages of Mankind, being aſſerted from thence, is a Mill-ſtone hung upon the Book of God, directly tending to ſink its Authority, and render it ſuſpected in the World. Upon this Foot St. *Paul* referr'd himſelf to the Judg-

ment of the *Corinthians*, ſaying: *I ſpeak unto wiſe men, judg ye what I ſay.* 1 *Cor.* 10. 15. Anſwerable whereunto I refer it to the Judgment of your Ladyſhip, whether a ſincere Love of the Light and Inſtruction of God, will not diſpel thoſe dark Fears, which ſuperſtitious Fancies are apt to create.

But St. *John* ſaith, that *God is Love.* 1 *Joh.* 4. 8. and therefore whatſoever proceeds from him muſt not be frightful, but lovely. Thus *Solomon* ſpeaking of Religion under the Character of Wiſdom, ſaith, *Her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace. Prov.* 3. 17. And St. *Paul* exhorting the *Philipians* to virtuous Practice, ſaith, *Whatſoever things are lovely think on thoſe things. Phil.* 4. 8. Nor was the *Gentile* a Stranger to this Doctrine. "Ὁ τι καλὸν φίλον ἐϛὶ

i.e.

i. e. That which is good is lovely, was the Saying of an old *Greek* Poet. *Theog.* How lovely is it to behold the Creation of God, wherein all things that fall under our cognizance, discover a wise Design, by which every Event tends to the Interest of the Universe! And the Character by which Mankind doth most resemble Deity, is in the highest Degree *lovely*. I mean a virtuous motion of Mind towards the Good of our Fellow-Creatures. For by how much the Affections of a Man are fixed upon publick Benefit, by how much the more any one endeavours to oblige Mankind, by so much are his Actions render'd *Lovely*; especially when this disposition of Mind is carried on without the prospect of Retaliation. For this is the Disposition of God towards Man, as *David* saith. *Like as a Father pitieth his Children, so the Lord pitieth those that*

fear him. Pſal. 103. 13. The natural Affection of the Father is fully anſwered by the Benefit which the Child receives, without aiming at any other Advantage. And in this reſpect the *Benevolence* of noble Founders, and publick Benefactors, as likewiſe the *Bounty* of great Princes, ſuch whoſe high Stations ſet them above Self-Intereſt, do render their Actions *moſt lovely*; becauſe they are incapable of any Return, beſides that Joy which naturally flows from the Advantages others receive by their Means.

Add to this, Madam, that a ſincere love of Virtue, excludes all ſtrong Self-intereſſed Hopes, as well as diſmal Fears. And thus *Moſes when he was come to years, refuſ'd to be call'd the Son of Pharo's daughter, chooſing rather to ſuffer Affliction with the People of God, than*

than to enjoy the pleasures of Sin for a season. Heb. 11. 24. *Josephus* relates that matter thus: *Thermutis*, the Daughter of *Pharaoh*, who had preserved the Life of *Moses* when very young, presented him to her Father when grown up, desiring that he might be appointed to succeed in the Government, she having adopted him for her Son. How lovely was it in *Moses* generously to refuse these Court-Offers of Greatness, in order to attempt the deliverance of his Brethren! 'Twas not then understood that an eager pursuit after Court-preferments, was the Mark of a true Patriot, but the Heroick and lovely Disposition of *Moses* which St. *Paul* sets forth, was a generous Compassion to his Countrymen, whom he was willing to rescue from Slavery with the hazard of his Life; as appear'd by his vigorous opposing the *Egyptian*,

whom he found ſmiting an *Hebrew*. *Exod.* 2. 12. And likewiſe by perfecting their Deliverance after he had conducted them into *Canaan*. For ſuppoſing the good *Moſes* inſtead of following the Advice of *Jethro*, and ſetting up the Judgment Seats of *Iſrael*, ſhould have been prevail'd upon, to have eſtabliſhed an *Egyptian* Miniſtry in *Canaan*, he would thereby have tarniſhed that lovely Character of a *Deliverer* of his Country, and Lover of his Brethren; which laſt Character is according to St. *John*, the Character by which one may know, if he be paſs'd from Death to Life. *We know that we have paſſed from death to life, becauſe we love the Brethren, he that loveth not his Brother abideth in death.* 1 *Joh.* 3. 14. i. e. in the ſtate and under the Sentence of Death, as our Commentators explain it. Whereas *He that loveth his Brother abideth*

deth in the light, 1 *Joh.* 2. 10. Such a one reſembles God, who is the *Father of Lights*. *Jam.* 1. 17.

And ſhould we conſider God with St. *James* as a common *Father of Comforts*, who maintains the Order of the Univerſe, providing ſuitable maintenance for all living Creatures, *Who maketh his Sun to ſhine on the evil and the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt, and on the unjuſt*; *Mat.* 5. 25. as our Saviour ſaith: Can we ſuppoſe ſuch a fatherly Diſpoſition as this is, does any way tend to ſtrike Terrour into our Hearts? and to lay it there as the Foundation of all our Duties. Surely nothing but the willing Affection of a dutiful Son can be a ſuitable Return, for the conſtant Love of an indulgent Father. To conclude this Argument, I think I may ſay, Madam, that although Fear may prevail upon

ſome ill Men to abſtain from Evil, yet 'tis only the Love of Virtue, which fixes our Inclinations upon good things. And I hope I may alſo add, That as a good Man has no need of Fear, to aſſiſt him in his purſuit after Virtue; ſo is it likewiſe evident, both from Natural, and Revealed Religion; that ſuch a one can have no Cauſe to be afraid of God.

II. As to the Fear of Men, which was the ſecond thing I was to conſider, 'tis plain, Madam, That if your Ladyſhip, ſhall obſerve Men to act in *Subordination* to God, by how much the Love of God prevails over you, ſo much the more fearful you will be of giving them Offence. Our Parents under God are our immediate Owners, Governours, and Benefactors. And the Honour which hereupon is due to them, includes an *awful Reſpect* to-

towards them; and if the Magistrate be indeed *the Minister of God to us for Good* (as St. *Paul* speaks) every Man will be cautious of giving him Offence. In such a Case, *Tribute* is to be given *to whom tribute is due, fear to whom fear, and honour to whom honour.* 1 *Cor.* 13. But since good Magistrates are a *Terrour* only *to Evil-doers*, a sincere Lover of Virtue, is far from Fear upon that Account.

But if your Ladyship, shall consider Men, as acting in *Opposition* to God, you may be allow'd to use all necessary Precautions, to preserve your self from their Tyranny. Nor is there any thing cowardly, mean, or depressive of your Spirit in this sort of Fear. *Beware of Men* (saith our Saviour to his Disciples) *For they will deliver you up to the Councils, and*

ſcourge you in their Synagogues, but if they perſecute you in one City fly into another. Mat. 10. 17. 23. *Nor ſhall he be afraid of evil tidings whoſe heart is fixed upon God*, ſaith holy *David. Pſal.* 112. 7.

But then will a Man find himſelf ſurrounded with tormenting Fears, and dreadful Suſpicions; when through want of a ſincere Love to his Great Owner, Governour and Benefactor, he hath caſt off all ſincere and upright walking, as in the Preſence of the Inviſible All-ſeeing God: When he hath caſt off that righteouſneſs, Juſtice, Honeſty, and Faithfulneſs, as would not fail to engage Mankind in his Support; and alſo to yield ſuch a Peace of Conſcience as will not ſuffer him to be diſturbed, though the Earth ſhould ſhake, and the Heavens be diſſolved. And then may a Nation be afraid of Evil Tidings,

dings, when the Love of God (which is chiefly made manifeſt by Love to our Brethren) waxeth cold, when a feavouriſh Heat of Diſſenſion ariſing from a wretched baſe Self-Intereſt, caſts them into Parties, when Publick Weal is regarded only, as it ſerves private Ends; as the loud Acclamation, *Great is Diana of the Epheſians*, was encouraged by the Gain which the Silver-Smiths made by the Temple of that Goddeſs. When publick Truſts ſhall be coveted by ſome to pleaſe their Vanity and Senſuality, by others, to gratifie their ſordid Love of Money, and by moſt to enſlave their Brethren; what Wonder if upon any extraordinary Event, *Mens Hearts ſhall fail them for fear, and for looking after thoſe things which are coming upon the earth? Luk.* 21. 26. As our Saviour foretold, concerning the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which

which was brought to pass by their fatal Divisions. How dreadful were the Tidings of *Israel*'s Captivity, which were brought to them by the Prophet *Jeremiah?* and were grounded on their want of Love to their Brethren, whom for private Interest they enslaved, when according to the Law of the Sabattical Year, and the Law of the *Jubile*, they ought to have made free. The Words of *Jeremiah* upon this Occasion are these: *Thus saith the Lord, ye have not hearkened unto me in proclaiming liberty every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour. Behold! I proclaim a liberty to you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine. And I will make you to be removed to all the kingdoms of the Earth. Jer.* 37. 17. The Effect of this Prophecy is visible at this Day, though the first fulfilling of it was by the Arms

of

of a *Babyloniſh Tyrant*; who was in that Day the great Patron of Idolatry and Tyranny; himſelf being no more than a *King of Slaves*.

But yet Madam, a true *Iſraelite* in whom was no Guile, who loved the Lord with all his Heart, and his Neighbour as himſelf, who was neither Ambitious, nor Covetous, nor over-ſollicitous concerning the Honours, Riches or Pleaſures, which the World affords, who walked watchfully in the Denyal of himſelf, ſo far as to hold no Confederacy with any known Sin, who when he has fallen from his Duty, has recovered himſelf by true Repentance; who has been true to his Promiſe, juſt in his Actions, charitable to the Poor, and well inclin'd to all Men: who could forgive Injuries, laying aſide all Thoughts of Revenge; who could be meek, calm, and

and gentle, when in the Hands of furious and violent Spirits; who was of a tender Diſpoſition, being as ready to prevent Men from falling into Immoralities and Dangers, as he was to compaſſionate them in Adverſity: Such a one as could be moderate in Power, and humble in Proſperity, whoſe Actions diſcover a Love to his Country, free from the Byas of private Intereſt, and whoſe hearty Inclinations were towards the Good of Mankind. Such a Man as this, was privileged from the Fear of evil Tidings, and was Commiſſioned to hope that *Through the voice of the Lord the Aſſyrian ſhall be beaten down, who ſmote with a rod. Iſa.* 30. 31.

Nay, Madam, 'twas to chear up the Heart of ſuch an *Iſraelite* as this, that the Prophet *Iſaiah* foretold the Downfal of the *Babyloniſh* Grand

Grand Monarch; whoſe Slaves uſually ſtiled him *the King*, as if there were no other King beſides him: Saying, *Tophet is ordain'd of old, yea for* the King *it is prepared, he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood: and the breath of the Lord like a ſtream of brimſtone doth kindle it.*

III. As to the Fear of Hell, Madam, I have very little to ſay; for if your Ladyſhip conſiders Hell as a conſummate State of Wickedneſs, doubtleſs a virtuous Perſon is at the greateſt diſtance from thence. He who out of a ſincere Love to God is careful to know, and conſcientious to do his Will, ſubmitting not only his Words and Actions, but the very Purpoſes of his Heart thereunto: He in whom the Love of God, hath caſt down all Pride and Haughtineſs both of Heart and Carriage, having reduced

ced his Paſſions to a due Moderation, and Temper; who through his Love to God, eſteems the World no more than it deſerves, and makes uſe of it only to gratifie a generous diſpoſition of Mind, ready to compaſſionate and help in Adverſity; this Man is ſo far from any Fear of Hell, that he has in ſome degree, the actual Poſſeſſion of Heaven upon Earth: And by being conſcious of ſuch his Love to God, he is actual Partaker of thoſe Divine Joys, which alone we can ſuppoſe to affect the Saints in Glory: That is, ſuch a Delight as never ſurfeits, nor cloys, though never ſo frequently renew'd, or ever ſo long continued, and ſuch as leaves no ill Reliſh behind it.

But on the other hand, if a Man bears no true Love to the Great and Good GOD, but dares com-

commit Sin with Presumption; if he be governed by unruly Passions, insatiable Desires, or by an ambitious, covetous, or malicious Temper; if he be moved by Envy, at the Prosperity of some, or by Revenge for small Offences taken at others; this Man is already sensible of Hell upon Earth. And though a thousand Inventions may be found out to quiet the evil Spirit, which arises from the *Self-consciousness* of his own wicked Heart; yet nothing can alleviate his *Torment*, because nothing can separate Conscience from the Soul of Man.

'Tis true, Madam, that sometimes the Instrumental parts of Religion are call'd in aid, to allay the Terrours of a Hell within; and these devotional Performances joyn'd with a strong Fancy, may for a time have some Effect

fect upon an Enthuſiaſtick Temper: As *David*'s Harp had upon *Saul*'s Melancholy, ſo long as the Muſick laſted. But yet the dreadful Apprehenſions of Guilt will not totally be extinguiſhed, till our earneſt Endeavours have recovered us to a ſincere Love of God.

Having thus endeavour'd to ſhew what Fear of God, of Man, and of Hell, is inconſiſtent with the Love of God; I hope it will appear that I did no Ill, when I offered to ſhew your Ladyſhip *yet a more excellent way*, that *of Charity or* Love; and adviſ'd you in ſome meaſure, to ſoften the Power of Fear in your religious Practices, and devotional Performances. I beg your Ladyſhip's favourable Conſtruction of what I have written in this Letter, meaning thereby to teſtifie

ſle the Reſpect which is due to you from

Your Ladyſhip's

Moſt obliged and

Moſt humble Servant.

FINIS.

Books Printed for, and Sold by A. *and* J. Churchil, *at the* Black Swan *in* Pater-Noſter-Row, 1704.

FOLIO.

TAlent's Chronological Tables.
Dr. Whitby's Comment on the Epiſtles

Camden's Britannia in Engliſh, Maps
Leybourn's Dialling with Figures
Sir R. L'Eſtrange's Æſop Fables
Machiavel's Works compleat
Buchanan's Chronicle or Hiſtory of the Kings of Scotland
Mr. Lock's Eſſay on Humane Underſtanding
Uſher's Body of Divinity
Cambridge Concordance enlarged
Diodorus Seculus's Hiſtory, Engliſh
Sir R. Blackmore's Prince Arthur
—— King Arthur
—— Paraphraſe on Job
Bp. Sanderſon's Sermons

Bp.

Bp. Brownrigg's Sermons
Bp. Hopkins's Works
Mr. Dod's Sayings
Stanly's Lives of Philoſophers
Joſephus's Hiſtory of the Jew
Wing's Art of ſurveying
Puffendorf's Law of Nature and Nations
Sir S. Dew's Journal of the Houſe of Lords in Queen *Elizabeth*'s Reign.
Mr. Booth of the nature of real actions
Sir H. Spelman's Remains
Dyer's Reports
Malpighii Opera Phyl. 2 vol
Pauſanius Græcæ Deſcriptio. per Kuneum
Caſtalio's Bible, Lat.
Faber Theſaurus
Limborc. Theologia Chriſtianæ
—— Hiſtoria Inquiſitiones
Mr. Lock's Human Underſtanding, Latin

QUARTO.

COmmon-place Book to the Holy Bible
Boyers French and Engliſh Dictionary
Markham's Works
Whitby contra Arius & Socinus
Rogers's 39 Articles

Clarks'

Clark's Praxis Curiis Eccleſiaſticis
Three Letters for Toleration

OCTAVO.

DR. Gibſon's Anatomy
Culpepper's Engliſh Phyſician
——— Diſpenſatory
——— Phyſick for the Poor
——— Of Rickets
——— Midwifry
Mr. Locke of Education
——— Of Coin and Tracts
—— Letter
—— Reply } to the Bp. of *Worceſt.*
—— 2d Reply.
Suetonius Lives Roman Emperors, Eng.
Two Treatiſes of Government
Gaſſendi's Morals
Eſop's Fables. eng. and lat. interlinary
Dr. Whitchcot's Sermons
Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity as delivered in Scripture
Poſing of the Parts
Hale's Knowledge of God
Monſ. St. Euremont's Works, 2 vol.
Leyborn's Arithmetick
Plato's Apology for Socrates
Standfaſt's Works
Meriton of high-ways
Dr. Hody of the Reſurrection
Drelincourt's Chriſtian Defence againſt fear of Death Bla-

Blagrave's Supplement to Culpeper's Engliſh Phyſician.
Boyl's Veneration of God
Scraphick Love
Leitenhouſe's Sermons
Arch-biſhop Leyton's Sermons
Future State
Bp. Wilkins of Prayer
— of Preaching; enlarged by the Bp. of *Norwich* and Bp. of *Chicheſter*
Abridgment of Mr. Lock's Human Underſtanding, *per* Mr. John Winne
Salmon's Polygraph
Don Quixote Engliſh, 2 vol.
Osborn's Works
Hom er's Iliads, gr.lat.
Minor Poets, gr. lat.
Screvelii Lexicon, per Hill,
Cole's Dictionary, eng. & lat.
Greek Common-prayer
Horace, per Mr. Baxter
——— Virgil
——— Juvenal
——— Lucian
——— Martial
Menely Virgil
—— Ovid Met.
—— Val. Maximus
—— Terence
—— Horace

Buchanan Hiſt. Scotiæ
Gullſton in Ariſtot. poeſies
Hartnoch Repub. Polonorum
Loſii concil. & medicin.
Neuentit analaſis infinitorum
Greek Teſtament, with Themes

TWELVES, &c.

ADventures of Telemachus, 5 parts
Engliſh Expoſitor, a Dictionary of hard words
Leyborn's Gunter's Line
Eſop's Fables, Eng.
Dr. Patrick's Verſion of Pſalms
Gentleman's Religion
Greek Bible
——— Common Prayer
——— Apocrypha
——— Teſtament
Sleidan de quatuor Imperiis
Robertſon Heb. Pſaltar
Horace Bond
Lucretii Faber
Muy's prax. Rationale
Petits de Amazontibus
Stearne de Viſitation. Infirmor.
Theſaurus Poeticus
Farnaby Ovid

FINIS.

MISC 58 G743893 24AC17